Risen Land

James Anthony Faris
RISEN LAND

BY

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(Under the Direction of Mr. Marc Moulton, MFA)

ABSTRACT

The sculptures I create are inspired by derelict manufactured spaces found within Bulloch County. Each object is created in Tabby, a historic building material comprised of oyster shells, lime, sand and water, commonly known as ‘the first American concrete.’ Tabby was often used in the Coastal South, speaking to the resourceful tradition of using available aggregates. The sculptures embrace the tonal and textural qualities provided by this material to yield ghost-like representations of architectural components while also referencing commercial and historic methods of construction.

Serving as a monument to the diverse history of each site, every sculpture is fabricated based on the scale of the original architecture. Whether the selection is derived from personal, commercial, or historical interest, preserving the specified sense of the structure always remains paramount. Within each sculpture, sections are intentionally left missing to reference a hindered capacity for each architectural component to fulfill its intended function. By focusing on facades in ruin, the works act as a metaphor for neglect, loss, transition and transformation.

INDEX WORDS: Derelict, Sculpture, Tabby, Architecture, Statesboro
RISEN LAND

by

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The work I have created throughout my Master of Fine Art (MFA) Candidacy is rooted in past regional, cultural and economic experiences. My undergraduate studies at the Savannah College of Art and Design took place in Savannah, GA, a city that integrates historic urban architecture with intermittent green space. As a BFA candidate studying Photography, I developed two bodies of work that may appear contextually incoherent but were closely linked in an underlying question: How does the human made and natural landscape meet to create the environment my physical human form interacts with? The first body of work explored photographing shadows (Figure One) while the second included photographing construction sites. The shadows of landscapes captured the appearance of physical forms that overlapped in the landscape as a metaphor for human’s ephemeral existence. I photographed the construction sites (Figure Two) as a way to understand what elements had to align to organize space: planning, destruction, foundation and form.
Over the last ten years I have reflected on these works and believe the inspiration for their creation originated in my childhood on Tybee Island. In the early 1980’s, Tybee Island, Georgia was a relatively contained community that offered affordable housing, moderate development expansion and a quaint community oriented isolationism. I lived at the end of a dirt road, went to school three blocks from my house, visited my grandmother down the road often and knew where the one grocery store, the one laundry mat, the one church was. In the late 1980’s, my family moved to Savannah, Georgia and thereafter my grandmother died, the school I had gone to on Tybee closed, and the Island I grew up on went through an economic revitalization that included new housing for higher income tenants and tourist rentals. With the disappearance of the landmarks I had recognized as signifiers of my youth, I have come to feel that development can be an erasure of the past and of identity.

In 2008 I was offered a position as Director of Downtown Development (DDD) for the City of Swainsboro is rural Emanuel County, Georgia. The position required a steady stewardship of resources: buildings, assets and historical narratives. Downtowns are typically the most historically relevant regions in a city. Downtown Development requires a Director to enhance cultural and economic prosperity within boundaries by utilizing what is available: historic buildings and spaces. With available resources, a Director works within their means to maintain essence of historical place while advancing relevant policies for current patrons and business owners. The experience as Director of Downtown strengthened a
curiosity in how public spaces can be revitalized, reinterpreted, and repurposed within an established historical narrative.

In 2012 I combined the concepts of my BFA photography depicting construction and ephemeral qualities as well as my experience as Director of Downtown Development into my sculptural work as a MFA student at Georgia Southern University. The 2012 work began with recognition that abandoned and derelict human made spaces still contain reference to their original purpose and design. I chose to work in human-made spaces within my community in Statesboro, Georgia that included signs of erosion and decay. Generally, human made structures are intended to perform a specific function (such as; a fence keeping people in or out, an asphalt parking lot to grant a smooth drivable surface for car traffic and storage etc.). If a space is left unkempt, the structures lose their function or efficiency, stricken by weathering, nature or use. Each structure I utilized in my work outlived its purpose or strength of material, leading to the disappearance of portions of each architectural structure. The work I developed for my MFA Thesis focuses on architectural sections of structures that had disappeared due to neglect whose residual structure I reference to gauge the mass, scale and texture of missing material so I can recreate it. In recreating said architecture, the work attempts to suspend the erasure of landmarks disappearing from the community I am just now embracing.
INTRODUCTION

The title for this body of work, *Risen Land*, stems from an early Egyptian origin myth. The legend begins with the Egyptians observing a mound of silt exposed from the receding flood waters of the Nile. The annual floods fertilized the land with minerals creating a potentially productive land mass for crops. The Egyptians considered this revealed mound to herald a forthcoming prosperous era of necessary food provisions for their civilization. The origin myth takes shape with the Egyptians conceiving a narrative where the chaotic waters of the ocean parted to reveal the first land, represented as a mound. In one supposition, the Egyptians honored this narrative with the building of Monuments to the occasion, the pyramids and similar mound forms being a result.

The title of this work pays tribute to this narrative with the creation of sculptural forms that represent aged architectural structures. These forms speak to a former purpose in the service of the land mass where they were developed, the City of Statesboro, Georgia. Each sculpture represents a distinct derelict structure that is in-between use and non-use, signifying the potential for new purpose and progress. The sculptures in *Risen Land* are created from Tabby, a material whose oyster aggregate implies the Ocean. Tabby’s historical
development as the first American concrete originated the construction of the first permanent building in the Southern United States.
I. DESCRIPTIONS OF CURRENT WORKS

GENERAL

The works represented *in Risen Land* include 550 South Zetterower (*Figure Three*), 323 U.S. 301 (*Figure Four*), 110 East Main Street (*Figure Five*), 104 Savannah Avenue (*Figure Six*), 105 Wilburn Road (*Figure Seven*), 14 East Vine Street (*Figure Eight*) and 88 North Mulberry Street (*Figure Nine*) titled as such to reference the specific geographical location of each structure in Statesboro, Georgia that inspired the creation of the work. The sculptures are fabricated to the scale of an original architectural component within each site. The architectural structures share derelict attributes. Chosen structures share three traits: 1. Human-made, 2. Existing outdoors in view of the public, 3. Containing observable decay, disarray or separation of material components resulting in hindered capacity to fulfill an intended function.

Each human-made structure is photo documented to record scale, texture and supplementary details. The structure is measured and initial appraisals as to cropping the site for a resulting sculpture are made. Following this site visit, a mold is created of the determined manufactured space representing scale and detail in the studio. A Post-Civil War Tabby Mixture created from Oysters, Hydrated Lime, Water, Sand, Portland cement and, on occasion, supplementary aggregate is created and poured into the mold. After a drying period, the Mold is
opened and the sculpture is erected or assembled as necessary. The resulting work is therein titled and relocated from the studio to a gallery space.
SPECIFIC DESCRIPTION

550 SOUTH ZETTEROWER

The 550 South Zetterower (Figure Three) sculptures represent two scale recreations of a wall section from a manufactured space that is visible from Stillwell Road. The original site is comprised of a forty eight foot wall made of concrete blocks which separate a road and railroad tracks from a Peanut Processing Plant in Statesboro, Georgia. The sculptures duplicate a thirty-eight and a half inch section of the wall containing one empty space where presumably a concrete block was once positioned. The South Zetterower Sculptures are thirty-eight and a half inches long, thirty inches tall and eleven ½ inches thick. The two sculptures are duplicate molds of the same cross section of wall. Each sculpture is made of a Post-Civil War Tabby Mixture.

Figure 3: 550 South Zetterower, 2013
Both sculptures contain low relief cuts within their surface which replicate the location of mortar in the source structure. The four sides of each sculpture are smooth while the two top sections are a roughhewn quality. On one side of the sculpture a cut measuring fifteen inches long, seven \(\frac{1}{4}\) inches tall and eleven \(\frac{1}{2}\) thick is missing from the top fourth of the sculpture. Each side of this empty space is flanked by a two inch round by seven and a fourth inch tall cushion of tabby present in the original site indicating leftover material. Each sculpture is hundreds of pounds.

Each sculpture is light gray with white speckled hues. Variations in material consistency reveal random layering of shells and Tabby.
323 U.S 301

The 323 U.S 301 (Figure Four) sculpture is a replica of a derelict sign located in Statesboro, Georgia that is composed of two concrete parallel walls. The sculpture is a scale representation of two sixty-one inches tall, three ½ thick walls standing parallel and three inches apart. The sculpture is made of Post-Civil War Tabby. The original walls are linked by metal bracing but this material in the sculpture is reinterpreted as rebar. Each wall contains low relief cuts within the surface to replicate the location of mortar as found in the surface of the original structure. The sculpture varies in texture from a smooth front perforated with oyster shells to a rough, jagged back. Eight half inch holes are cut through each wall and filled by rebar that is bent, along the façade of each wall, in a downward motion. The rebar is a consistent brown-rusted hue. A viewer can see the rebar that links and stabilizes the two walls of the sculpture.

Figure 4: 323 U.S. 301, 2013
110 EAST MAIN STREET

The 110 East Main Street *(Figure Five)* is a sixty eight inch by eight inch by forty one inch sculpture representing part of an architectural façade located at 110 East Main Street in Bulloch County, Georgia. The source site contained eroded bricks embedded into an outer wall. The sculpture is a scale representation of the original site depicting low and high relief impressions that reference bricks in various states of decay. The sculpture is created in Tabby, concrete and assorted aggregates, including photographs, rubber and metal. Melted blue foam covers the façade of the work.

*Figure 5: 110 East Main Street, 2014*
104 SAVANNAH AVENUE

The 104 Savannah Avenue (Figure Six) sculpture is a reproduction of a parking curb created in Tabby. The sculpture measures sixty four inches by five inches by five inches. Two ½ inch rebar rods bisect 104 Savannah Avenue, extending outward nine inches on one side and thirteen inches on the other. The façade of the sculpture is incased in pink melted foam.
105 WILBURN ROAD

105 Wilburn Road (Figure Seven) is inspired by a structure over a culvert. The sculpture depicts a brick driveway culvert split in the middle atop a half pipe. The sculpture includes a bollard positioned beside the culvert structure. The artwork measures fifty four inches by twenty four inches by twenty inches. The sculpture is created in Tabby and includes rubber and colored plastic aggregates visible along the artworks edges. The split driveway culvert wall contains low relief cuts within the surface to replicate the location of mortar as found in the surface of the original brick structure.

Figure 7: 105 Wilburn Road, 2014
14 EAST VINE STREET

14 East Vine Street (*Figure Eight*) is a sculpture created in Tabby, concrete and pine straw aggregate representing an architectural façade located on Vine Street. The sculpture depicts a wall section containing fifty four bricks encased in mortar within a larger wall structure. The sculpture measures thirty four ½ inches by five ½ inches by forty four inches. Low relief cuts within the surface of the outer wall structure duplicate the location of mortar as found in the surface of the original brick structure. Tabby bricks treated with slip and red stain are enclosed in a white Tabby mixture to simulate mortar. Above the faux bricks and mortar, a two inches by twenty inch gap is present to convey material deterioration present in the source structure.

*Figure 8: 14 East Vine Street, 2014*
88 NORTH MULBERRY STREET

The 88 North Mulberry Street *(Figure Nine)* sculpture represents a scale recreation of a broken window and frame located beside an industrial space visible from Mulberry Road. The original site is comprised of four industrial size window frames from which one window at a size of thirty nine inches by three inches by seventy nine inches was created in Tabby as a sculpture. 88 North Mulberry Street is comprised of twelve eight inch by eighteen inch panes that may appear to be broken or incomplete enclosed between a grid pattern and sash. The sculpture is created in Tabby and concrete.
II. MATERIALITY

HISTORY

The sculptures presented in Risen Land are created of Post-Civil War Tabby. Tabby is commonly known as ‘the first concrete material made and utilized in the United States.’ While variations of Tabby were used in coastal cities in Ireland and along the Mediterranean, the use of Tabby as an architectural building material may be best known within the context of colonial settlements along the Southeastern United States from 1580-1821 and American settlements from 1821-1870. Tabby is traditionally a mixture of equal parts oyster shells, distilled water, sand and lime made from burnt oyster shells. Permanent Tabby dwelling structures were created by the Spanish, British and Americans living along the Southern Coast.

Tabby was used for such diverse purposes as the creation of walls, flooring, stairs, roof slabs and in one case, as a molded baptismal font. Settlers with access to the raw materials and work force necessary to create tabby created the first permanent forts and dwelling structures in counties across Coastal Georgia, South Carolina and Florida. The knowhow to create Tabby fluctuated during the late 1700’s, resulting in a decline of use until Thomas Spalding reintroduced the

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1 Gritzner, Janet H., The Conservation and Preservation of Tabby: Distribution of Tabby in the Southern United States (The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1998), 7-12.
material benefits in a local promotion published in 1830. The Civil War marked the end of traditional use of Tabby due to the end of the Southern Plantation era, a disruption of building activity and the development of inexpensive commercial cements. Only about a dozen tabby structures have been discovered from the Post-Civil War era.

Following the Civil War era, the tabby formula was amended to include the addition of Portland cement to enhance swifter drying times and material strength. Even with this advancement, the last date of Tabby construction was in the 1920’s. In 1998 a symposium on historic tabby was held on Jekyll Island in Georgia and focused on the conservation and preservation of existing Tabby structures throughout the Southeast. Lecturers presented varied methods used over the last century to preserve historic structures such as sealing decaying architectural sites with asphalt and substandard mortars. The symposium was among the first Historic Preservation Seminar to address the need for standard operating procedures to protect and conserve these valued, historic sites created in Tabby.

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USE WITHIN WORK

The material the sculptures for Risen Land are created from, Post-Civil War Tabby, is informative of the conceptual content in the work. Tabby, as a historically Southern building method utilizing available resources, supplements my attention to local and regional sites in my community of Statesboro, Georgia. The principal use of Tabby, historically, was for the creation of utilitarian architectural elements. Similarly, the work in Risen Land focuses on utilitarian sites. In recreating the neglected or derelict in utilitarian sites with Tabby, I link the contemporary structure with the historic effort to fabricate a constructive useable landscape.

Considering Tabby’s historic advantage as one of the most stable building methods used during colonial times, I desire to create an ongoing representation of architectural components that have become neglected so as to preserve them, if only as a monument to an original site. Such sites have lost partially, if not completely, their value as an archetype of function. Paying homage to neglected architecture with historically recognized material empowers the structures in a manner that perhaps it lost inherently as a site-specific structure. In representing empty, broken or neglected architecture in sculpture, a viewer may become reintroduced to that site and structure. This historically recognizable medium may encourage viewing of such structures beyond its form or function, allowing viewers to consider architecture with an emotive reaction akin to sentiment.
III. FURTHER ANALYSIS

1. MASS AND SCALE

The sculptures in *Risen Land* are fabricated based on the scale of site specific architectural structures in Statesboro, Georgia. The mass and scale is determined from photo documentation and measurement data collected at the source site. The width, height and length data is paired with prominent textural details; acting as a blueprint for the reinterpretation of a source structure into a sculpture.

The sculptures in *Risen Land* are fabricated based on actual architectural structures fashioned from wood, concrete, glass and brick. The source medium is reinterpreted in a sculpture into Tabby and various aggregate. Translating the weight of a light material like wood into a heavier Tabby allows the viewer to examine the form in different way. The appearance of the material in scale and shape mimics the site but the sculpture takes on a new presence of form as Tabby. The work may offer a viewer a distinct response to presence and atmosphere in relation to scale and mass previously unconsidered in the non-Tabby structure.

2. FORM REFLECTS FUNCTION

These works are based on observable decay, disarray and the separation of material components that illustrate a reduced capacity to fulfill an intended
function. The probable utilitarian function of the structure located at 104 Savannah Avenue is to act as a parking curb: a framework to restrict access beyond a certain point for cars when being left idle. The structure at this site may also be viewed as speaking to private or public ownership or an effort to generate order.

Each source structure represented in *Risen Land* includes intrinsic qualities that speak to its function through its form. As each structure contains some derelict component, I view the source architectural structures as being in between form and function. The original site structures were functional, however, through decay they have become more form. In separating a structure from its predisposed function as well as spatial information to recreate it as a sculpture, the *Risen Land* work speaks predominantly to form with intrinsic information addressing its former function.

A sculpture like *550 South Zetterower* represents the mass and scale of a structure created as a wall. The shape and form indicate the original building material: concrete blocks. The cropping inherent in the work alludes to the work being a cutout, evidenced by the shape of concrete blocks continuing outward along each edge, indicating the wall is longer than shown. This also allows a viewer to conclude that the sculptural form was chosen from a middle section of an original wall. Further clues as to the function of the form could be established...
if a viewer took the information included in the title of the work conveying the address of the site and visited said site.

3. GALLERY AS EXHIBITION VENUE

The works in *Risen Land* are intended to be viewed within a Gallery, a space devoid of information about the source site. The sculptures allow viewers to scrutinize materiality, function and separation.

4. MATERIAL STABILITY

The sculptures are made from Post-Civil-War Tabby comprised of Oyster Shells, Hydrated lime, cement, water and sand. Tabby is commonly known as ‘the first concrete material made and utilized in the United States.’ Works like **550 South Zetterower** have the appearance of strength and longevity due to its substantial dimension and weight. Works like **88 North Mulberry Street** additionally have the appearance of tensile strength due to the Tabby material but while stiff, the thin nature of a pour for the window frames actually reduces material strength and makes each pane in the sculpture delicate.

Historic Tabby can decay over time in the natural elements if not covered by stucco or a sealant. The organic components, oysters, will also deteriorate over time leading to subsequent decay.
5. CONTENT ARISING FROM COLOR

Each sculpture is limited in color tonality. Tabby can range from stark white to pale grey. The sculptures embrace the tonal and textural qualities provided by the material to yield ghost-like representations of architectural components. The sculptures are intended to blend into the architecture of a white walled gallery space.

6. INHERENT ICONOGRAPHY

As discussed in Form Reflects Function (Page 19-20) each sculpture references an inherent iconography intrinsic to commercial, historical and residential architecture. A section of driveway culvert in 105 Wilburn Road may invoke personal and historic references to icons present within the work such as private ownership or public utility. Each work, though, at its core, are intended to represent a utilitarian article within the human-made landscape. Within the context of the gallery location, this utilitarian structure and its predisposed reference are expected to be questioned by viewers. The gallery forum is expected to make the formal qualities of the sculpture become more pronounced and separated from its site specific context.

7. REPETITION

The 550 South Zetterower and 110 East Main Street sculptures were inspired by sites built with concrete blocks and mortar. Each of the sculptures created for Risen Land speak to a repetition inherent in the arrangement of commercial
building materials often found in a single unified structure: the single item is added to other items to create a complete structure. Dilapidated, broken or missing units produce a deficiency to the whole ensuring that a structure cannot function as intended.

The sculptures simulate the addition of single items to create a complete structure through low relief inserts referencing mortar. The sculptures are actually whole forms depicting repetition through the inserts to speak to a part-to-whole relationship in commercial architecture. The repetition of mortar lines in the sculpture indicating parts joined together allude to the possibility a material separation that is unlikely in the sculpture but conceivable in the source site.

8. TEXTURE AND FACADE

Each sculpture in *Risen Land* includes four unique textural components: smooth, bumpy, form and process. The first texture is a smooth glossy finish imparted from the Tabby by the plastic or wood of the mold form. The second is the aggregate (Oysters or on occasion other various materials) penetrating the surface of the form. The third texture is the form, such as mortar between blocks in the surface of the original structure. The fourth texture is created from the direction of the Tabby pour. This texture is course and irregular.
9. **EMPTYNESS AS CONTENT**

The 550 South Zetterower sculpture is a representation of a section of concrete wall that has begun to decay and illustrates an empty space where presumably a concrete block sat. The 323 U.S. 301 sculpture represents a raw façade that lacks signage. The missing elements reference observable decay, disarray or separation of the material components resulting in hindered capacity to fulfill a function.

The degree to which these form’s apparent decay is represented may affect a viewer’s interpretation of how complete or functional each site remains. Information about the mass, scale and texture of a missing segment is made possible by the negative space it inhabits. The 550 South Zetterower sculpture exhibits appearance of evenly placed concrete blocks, all Tabby, with one block missing. The empty space, therefore, references real material and form although absent.

A viewer may ask themselves why this material is missing or what relationship this emptiness has to the site or structure. A viewer may also inquire to how vital this empty element is to the understanding of the piece as a whole. As the artist, I intend these negative spaces to formally speak to function or lack thereof and neglect from an owner and/or the general public. Metaphorically I intend these sculptures to speak to loss, transition and transformation.
10. WORKS AS MONUMENT

A Monument is defined as: “1. something built or placed to commemorate a person, event, etc., 2. A building or natural site preserved for its beauty or historical interest, 3. Any enduring evidence or notable example of something.\textsuperscript{6}” Commemorate is defined as “honoring the memory of.”\textsuperscript{7} Preserve is defined as “to keep or maintain.” To Maintain is defined as “to keep in existence or to keep in a specified state or position\textsuperscript{8}.”

The sculptures are monuments because preserve and honor the site structure. The sculptures separated from the site act as mobile homages, offering a new vision as structures intended to be appreciated and considered.

11. PLACE AND REGION

The material the sculptures for \textit{Risen Land} are created from, Post-Civil War Tabby, is informative of the conceptual content in the work. Tabby, as a historically Southern building method, supplements my attention toward local and regional sites within my community of Statesboro, Georgia. The principal use of Tabby historically was for the creation of utilitarian architectural elements. Similarly, the work in \textit{Risen Land} focuses on utilitarian sites. In recreating neglected or derelict manufactured sites with Tabby, I link contemporary regional structure with historic building methods.


\textsuperscript{8} Maintain, Retrieved on January 12, 2014 from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/maintain
CONCLUSIONS

The works represented in *Risen Land* are inspired by specific geographical locations of structures in Statesboro, Georgia. They are representations denoting architectural components within each site. The architectural structures share derelict edifice within a manufactured space. The sculptures are created from a Post-Civil War Tabby mixture created from Oysters, Hydrated lime, water, sand, Portland cement and, on occasion, supplementary aggregate. The value/hue of the Tabby results in works that exhibit ghost-like representations of form while the texture of the Tabby speaks to materiality of commercial and historic methods of construction.

The scale and mass of the sculptures are dictated by the scale of the original site. The sculptures in *Risen Land* are monuments to human made sites of personal, commercial or historical interest. Each sculpture contains empty sections of observable decay, disarray or separation of material components, which result in a hindered capacity for the structure to fulfill its intended function. The empty spaces reveal function or lack thereof, neglect from an owner and/or the general public and metaphorically emptiness, loss, transition and transformation.
CHAPTER THREE

HISTORIC REVIEW OF ARTISTIC METHODS

INTRODUCTION

My current art works address manufactured architectural spaces in transition. The ephemeral qualities intrinsic to Robert Smithson’s Earth Works have informed my evolution of thought while creating sculptures related to site. Gordon Matta-Clark’s Anarchitecture pieces have dominated my intellectual understanding in separating architecture from the sites they were manufactured. Rachel Whiteread’s casts have influenced my understanding and explorations into the impact of unoccupied spaces. The sculptures I have made address materiality, site and unoccupied space, to reflect the transience and transformation of physical forms.
Evolution of Work: FALL 2012

The first sculptures I created addressing missing or empty architectural spaces were made with ephemeral materials. Each material shared three qualities: not harmful to the environment, would disappear over time and included a state-change (e.g. water to ice, liquid wax to solid wax etc.). I made sculptures that mimicked the volume, scale and shape of missing parts and re-installed them into the original structure. (Figure Ten). The 2012 exploration of this concept included four site specific installations: a bread payphone, an ice pothole, a wax fence, and a candy cinderblock wall. Viewers of the installations may have seen structures that appeared to be complete, perhaps functional. Viewers who experienced the sculptures after the temporary material began to erode may have seen the space in a state of deterioration. These works spoke to time and the space the viewers and I inhabited during 2012.

Each sculpture’s deterioration properties varied by the materials it was composed of. The experience of observing and documenting each material’s interaction within the
landscape was similar to Robert Smithson’s *Asphalt Rundown* (*Figure Eleven*).
This Smithson work consists of the artist depositing the materials down a hill. The material moves downward pulled by gravity following a route of least resistance. Smithson’s work included video documentation chronicling the course the materials took as they navigated the natural landscape, at first with momentum, then as it stopped and took root within the landscape. My materials may have had a longer element of time than Smithson's two works but they were prone over time to similar forces of nature, such as gravity, heat and weather conditions.

The element of time played a role within the Fall 2012 body of work in three distinct ways: historical time, successive time and recorded time. The work I created relied principally on historical time. The structures had at one time been newly built, but currently are derelict or eroded structures. I assumed that the structures had been a source of pride for each owner: a component of some necessity to complete the needs of the property as a whole. These human-made structures originated to a historical time when they had been built, maintained and appreciated but as time passed the structures fell into disarray, breaking and eroding.

Artist Gordon Matta-Clark deals primarily with discarded properties and creates ‘Building cuts’: sculptural transformations of abandoned buildings
produced by cutting and dismantling a given architectural site. Matta-Clark began his building cuts with *Splitting (Figure Twelve)*, cutting a suburban house, scheduled for demolition, into two parts. Matta-Clark’s purposeful cuts into the structure often reveal the inside of the space to an outside public. In my work, each space I addressed existed in view of public roads. The work I installed similarly brought attention to a space through highlighting a remnant that had once been occupied and cared for.

The successive time component began upon installation of the sculpture within the space and ended upon the completion of decomposition. The sculpture created from impermanent materials would begin to erode upon installation. The process of erosion took place because of the sculpture’s material composition and because it was unattended by human consideration. The result was often rapid attrition and eventual decay. Mierle Ukeles’s performance *Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks* speaks to successive time in the artist’s interaction with a site over hours as she monotonously scrubbed a museum’s floor clean. Ukeles’s performance epitomizes that “the guarantee of a specific relationship between an art work and its site is not based on physical permanence of that relationship but rather on the recognition of its unfixed impermanence, to be experienced as an unrepeatable and fleeting situation.”

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The successive time period and the historical time period are related in that, when human-made materials are unkempt, they far farther from humans ability to rehabilitate them and become part of nature and natural processes. The elements recapture the forms and absorb them into nature. The historical and successive time periods were stabilized as documents in the final element of time I will discuss: recorded time.

The recorded time component included documentation of both the Historical Time and Successive Time. Historical Time was examined in recorded time through documentation of ownership and planning for property development such as documentation from the earliest recorded documents. These materials connected me, as the artist, to a chronological understanding of the space. These documents also created a relationship between viewers and the space so as to compare the past with the present.

The second component of recorded time was documentation of the installed sculptures. The documentation consisted of photographs upon installation of the sculpture and throughout its decay. Andy Goldsworthy uses photography and video to record his site-specific works as did Gordon Matta-Clark. With Matta-Clark, the documentation of work is a key factor is preserving the fact that there was a work created since his pieces often disappeared after their creation. A biographer of Matta-Clark noted that “save for fragments of architecture the artist preserved- and save for some documentation itself- the work … all but ceased to
exist." In creating ephemeral works, it was necessary to record the results of
the labor if I intended to have some permanent representation of that labor.

**Evolution of Work: SPRING 2013**

The first method I developed in the Spring of 2013 was Sectioning: creating a
sculptures that mimicked manufactured spaces out of wood. These sculptures
read as architectural cutouts of real structures. My first sculpture depicted a broken window frame
recreated to portray its foundation, frame and panes. The finished work was titled *Mulberry
Street Window* (*Figure Thirteen*) to offer viewers an address of the space that inspired its creation.
The work was painted white to signify that it was a ghostlike depiction of a real site. The choice in
painting *Mulberry Street Window* a latex white may conjure Rachel Whiteread’s palette for many of her works including *Untitled
(Paperbacks)*, 1997 or *Untitled (Stairs)*, 2001. Whiteread has finished many of architectural works with inconspicuous tones that ensure the work is neutral
within the environment so as to keep with her theme of empty and unrecognized spaces.

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The main focal point in *Mulberry Street Window* is its twelve broken panes recreated to full scale. The broken empty spaces contrast the stark white finish of the frame and base. The works I made utilizing the Sectioning method were all created to overwhelm the human physical form; they were large to present the viewer as small in contrast.

A similar piece I made utilizing the Sectioning process expanded the idea of human interaction with space by recreating a forty eight foot by thirty inch by eight inch section of wall in wood. The long expanse of wood framing contains six smaller spaces that had been broken at the site. These spaces hold red placeholders to contrast the framing. A viewer experiencing this work has to walk over forty eight feet to examine the whole piece. Sectioning work became a method to reinterpret space and structure. As I progressed in creating wooden structures depicting empty spaces, I began to question context of site. With the large scale works I tried to inform my audience about the site with full scale representations of works at the same viewing height as the site. As the Sectioning pieces evolved I began to withhold some information to focus on Fragments; a method that emphasizes parts of a larger architectural whole.

Fragments became a way for me to crop spaces with a cross section the site. The presented fragment was a separation of context and environment. The method I used to create Fragments borrowed from Sectioning in that I made the pieces out of wood and painted them white. In contrast to Sectioning, Fragments
were made to be wall hangings, negating their examination in-the-round and elevating them to objects not bound to a foundation. Fragments such as Savannah Avenue Fragment (Figure Fourteen) depict a cropped part of brick wall that has traces of decay. Empty spaces in the brick revealed metal backing. I wished to include ephemeral materials as part of the creative process so I made Savannah Avenue Fragment to house an incandescent light to heat and melt any material incorporated in the empty space.

In integrating the process of ephemeral material decay I connected my 2012 work with my current exploration of Fragments. Conceptually, I am attracted to simulating natural decay of material using artificial methods. The creation of Fragments introduced me to the idea of harnessing energy to spur decay. I explored two ways to utilize energy: electric and human energy. Electric energy was applied through a light and/or a heating coil. The electricity heated metal to instigate a change of state of an ephemeral material installed within the work. Human energy was used to pump air into a vinyl block. After inflation was complete, the block began to deflate. The energy apparatus within Fragments spoke to figurative power to create and destroy. While I felt strongly about this methodology for communicating process and decay, I delayed integrating it into the last Fragments explorations to investigate other methods to study space and structure. The resulting fragments dislocated the sculptures
from environmental atmosphere of site, allowing them to better consider a more general essence of emptiness.

The Fragments exploration continued to include a combination of two or more Fragments into one piece. The resulting work spoke to the two source architectural structures the pieces were inspired by but also depicted a shared identity of being broken and/or eroded. The final exploration dealt with duplication of one site several times. Each previous Fragment I created had been an individual duplication of a specific site to scale in wood. This final Fragment exploration was created utilizing the same materials and methods with the result of two works that shared the same site as inspiration for its creation. The Sectioning and Fragments works attempted to offer a true replication of the original structure. This exploration was inspired by how Fabio Viale’s marble works can depict precise and intricate reinterpretations of real objects and structures (Figure Fifteen). As the final Fragment exploration took place I reflected more deeply on the original structure as I moved further away from its site.

The duplication of site multiple times through this method introduced how separated the work could become from its origin. I realized, following this work that since the fabricated work was made to be seen in a gallery a viewer could
not experience the real site and the fabricated Fragment site at the same time: In order to view one site a viewer would have to abandon the other (Figure Sixteen). This abandonment took the place of the ephemeral exploration I began with in the Fall 2012 with eroding/decaying works. To emphasize this point, one can look toward Dennis Oppenhiem’s A Stone Left Unturned. The work is documentation of an earthwork that alludes to location, movement, work, art, concept and land, all present in one place and in one time. Having made site-specific works and documentation of them, I found with the Fragments and Sectioning that I too could offer content without context of space by removing the information of a structure from its space, abandoning the real but alluding to its passing existence.

**Evolution of Work: FALL 2013**

The final form of the works in Risen Land is analyzed in Chapter Two but I will explore inspirations and encouragements in this section. I owe a debt of gratitude to the work of Gordon Matta-Clark’s building cuts specifically Bingo, 1974 (Illustration Seventeen). In this work, Matta-Clark separated and relocated
a wall section to be displayed as a sculptural work. Bingo represents an architectural part separated from its whole holding holds within a powerful essence of its raw material and action. Matta-Clark describes the work this way: “Many of the buildings had suffered heavy arson and were the epitomy [sic] of urban neglect. These first works simply involved moving into spaces with a handsaw and cutting away rectangular sections of the floor or walls to create a view from one space into another. The sections were carefully removed from their original positions to an art gallery.”

Understanding the basis of the work in Risen Land is reliant on two main considerations: material and content. The material, Tabby, is a historical building tool that is informative of region, construction and the past. The material has been used only infrequently in contemporary architecture and has mostly been eliminated from common use. The abandonment of this material is a metaphor for the abandonment and neglect of structures.

The indication of empty space within neglected or abandoned structures is paramount in understanding the content of the work in Risen Land. Within each sculpture, sections are intentionally left missing to reference a hindered capacity for each architectural component to fulfill its intended function. By focusing on facades in ruin, the works act as a metaphor for neglect, loss, transition and transformation. The work of Robert Smithson resulting from his seminal essay A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey is an inspiration for my work,

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12 Lee, Pamela M., Object to be Destroyed (The MIT Press, 2000) Xii.
which I consider a monument to discarded architecture: “Those holes in a sense are the monumental vacancies that define, without trying, the memory traces of an abandoned set of futures.” The evolution of the work in Risen Land has been made more succinct due to the considerations and interconnectedness of material, content and the artist’s work I have cited.

WORKS CITED


